CAMOENS—THE LYRIC POET

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Last year I spoke of Camoens at Yale University; this year it is my good fortune again to speak of him and to do it before the institution in which, as a true poet, drawing inspiration more from woman than from man, he would prefer, among all others of this country, to anchor his fame. Love was the daily bread of his genius; as a poet, he fed on love; in his early verses, as the singer of his own joys and pains; in his maturity, as the mirror of its power on nature and mankind. I will attempt tonight to give you an idea of the part that the worship of woman plays in his work. But, before, I had better say a word on the part it played in his own life, and for this I will draw a short *raccourci* of that life.

Much has been written on it that seems to me an attempt at vivisection. It is cruel to snatch the innermost secrets of a man from the privacy, nay, from the oblivion, to which he wished his most clement Madonna would relegate them, and to uncover his life before masked posterity, simply because he created a masterpiece.

The principal events in the life of Camoens may be resumed thus. He was born in 1524, and received a strong classical education at Coimbra under his uncle, the chancellor of the University, Frei Bento de Camoens. After 1542 he settled in Lisbon, courting the beauties of the Palace and writing to them no end of verses, until he fell in true love with one of them, a young Lady to

the Queen. This love caused his relegation from the capital and his enlistment for Africa, where he was wounded and lost one of his eyes, an event which disabled him for general courtship. Returning to Lisbon, he wounded a man in a street fight, was incarcerated, and could only free himself by engaging for military service in India. In 1553 he leaves for the East, where he will spend sixteen years, from his 29th to his 45th year. This is the period of the Lusiads. In 1569 he returned to Lisbon, after constant misfortune. In 1572 the Lusiads was published. In 1580 Portugal dies as a nation, thanks to him for sixty years only, and he dies with her. This is the frame of his life. The first half of it belongs to the Lyric, the second to the Epic poet, although the Lyric was never as great in his youth as under the first shadows of decline.

Much remains doubtful in that life. Two men in the present time, one of them now deceased, have done much to reconstruct it, Dr. Theophilo Braga and the German, Dr. Wilhelm Storck. Their names will be forever associated with his as those of the Morgado de Matteus in the first quarter and of Viscount de Juromenha after the middle of the last century. They have done considerable work, but one wonders if the doubtful points will ever be settled. At the end of the nineteenth century, Dr. Storck, for instance, started the idea that the ever-acknowledged mother of Camoens, Dona Anna de Sá, was only his stepmother, his true mother having died while giving birth to him. Philip the Second of Spain granted a pension to Dona Anna de Sá in the belief that she was the mother of the poet, but Dr. Storck believes more in his own interpretation of a verse of Camoens than in the Royal decree of the Spanish King. Both books, that of Theophilo Braga

and that of Dr. Storck, swarm with new conceptions of the events in the poet's life, nearly all based on their reading of his poems, dated and located by them anew. There is much ingeniousness in their restorations, but I feel sure the poet would wonder at many of the episodes and intentions sworn by them. I must say I speak with the highest respect for their knowledge and their work and under a very great debt, but I cannot help thinking that both feel too sure of their divining gift.

I am afraid that with the advance of years there is a tendency to concentrate admiration and to let one man represent the literature of an epoch or of a people. Something of the kind is happening to me with regard to Camoens; but I have not yet reached the period of fetichism, as Storck, Theophilo Braga, Richard Burton, and others did. Every truly great work must contain much rock by the side of the gold. I find dreary, long passages in Dante, Milton, or Camoens. I am certainly wrong, and they right, as the author reads what he composes at the light of his inspiration; his writing is only the shadow of what rushes on him, either through his brain or through his heart, and which he tried to reduce to words. Other people read without any interior light to illuminate them as to the source of the thought; they receive only the ashes of the poet's inspiration, the echo of his inner song, and they interpret him, each in his own way.

There is a doubtful point in the history of Camoens of the most intense interest. The dispute between his claimant birth-cities move only their own citizens; the dispute about the woman whose love inspired him appeals to a much wider class, that of lovers, and not only to lovers alone, to all who give them a smile. Tra-

dition has fixed her name as Catherina de Athayde, and her rank or employment as that of Lady to the Queen, Dona Catherina. Unfortunately, there was, it seems, more than one Dona Catherina de Athayde in the Royal Palace of Lisbon, at least two: the daughter of Dom Alvaro de Souza, and the daughter of Dom Antonio de Lima. The chief biographers, including Braga and Storck, agree that the poet's enchantress was the latter; the claim of the first, however, has revived since the publication of a passage in the papers of her confessor. The story with the daughter of Dom Antonio de Lima would be this: Camoens saw her in her adolescence, was relegated from Court for aspiring to her, and remained faithful to that love through all his persecutions and her neglect until her death. She never married and died young in Court. The story with the daughter of Dom Alvaro de Souza would be this: Camoens loved her before her marriage, which upset all his life and made him strong enemies in Court. Persecution caused his exile and his enlistment for Africa. When he returns to Lisbon it is to hear of her marriage. Hence his fight with one of her husband's relatives and his departure for India, having nothing else to attach him to his country. There seems to exist more reality in the second story: it accounts better for the tone of his love sonnets, and it alone accounts for those in which he complains of having been sacrificed to an unworthy rival; it accounts for the aggression he made on a relative of hers in the King's service; it accounts better for his distress, for the life he led, and for his departure.

One cannot help seeing a strange coincidence in the assault committed by Camoens on Gonçalo Borges, half-brother of Ruy Borges, the husband of Dom

Alvaro de Souza's daughter. And what to say of her words to her confessor, Frei João do Rosario, from the Dominican Convent of Aveiro, a house to which she was most attached and where she is believed to rest? This is the note about her found in her confessor's papers: "And every time I spoke to her of the poet, exiled because of her, I had always the answer that it was not so and that it was his great soul that had committed him to great enterprises in remote countries." As she died in 1551, the reference here is to the absence of Camoens in Africa. Perhaps she knew not where he had gone. The questioning by her confessor shows that the attachment of Camoens was well known around her, while her answer, although that of a faithful wife, who wished to stop all murmurs, shows she could not hide her admiration for the poet, who had loved her in her maidenhood and loved her still without hope.

The problem is not easy to solve, as the most beautiful love verses of Camoens were written in India and speak of a long sentiment, still in its constancy, although subdued by resignation and through the death of all earthly hope, and there is no doubt, if dates on tombstones are not altered, that the daughter of Dom Alvaro died before his departure for the East. Is it possible that he had not heard of her death? One thing, however, appears most probable from the verses of Camoens: that the young person he so ardently loved married another man, and that he remained faithful to her.

The love of Dante for Beatrice did not die with her marriage; the effect of the marriage on her poet was only to render that love immortal by making her unattainable to him. There is much resemblance between

the love verses of Camoens and those of Dante and Petrarca indicating a similar story. The intensity of despair which he puts in his verses speaks of an obstacle more hopeless than the opposition of others to the two lovers's will. The love that he received and which he pours forth in his LUSIADS did not come from the look of a young girl, soon after, and forever, an absent and silent image in his mind. It speaks of the full reciprocation of two hearts beating in unison.

Wordsworth, asking a critic not to scorn the sonnet, reminded him of Shakespeare and of Camoens,

> Camoens soothed with it an exile's grief,

and when Elizabeth Browning wanted a title for her love sonnets, that would veil for a moment her authorship, Browning could not find a better one than this—*Sonnets from the Portuguese.* These two reminiscences are sufficient to show the deep impression caused among the poets of England in past generations by Camoens's sonnets. Some of them appeared in the little book of Lord Strangford, *Poems from the Portuguese of Luis de Camoens,* printed in 1803, and many more in the *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Luis de Camoens* of John Adamson, published in 1820. The admiration of Robert Southey, expressed by his own translations, contributed much to place the love poems of Camoens alongside those of Dante and Petrarca. In Camoens, as in Dante, the epic eclypses entirely the lyric, still the lyric is of first magnitude. The reason is that the epic, or collective, light is more powerful of its nature than the lyric, or personal, one. It is a very considerable work, the lyric work of Camoens. Some pretend that even without the LUSIADS it would be enough

to assure him his rank among the greatest poets. I believe that without the Lusiads his name, owing to the narrower circle of Portuguese, would not compete with Petrarca, and I am afraid that he would not even be recognized in Portugal and Brazil as infinitely above all other native poets. I do not speak for myself. I place him in a solitary sphere in the literature of the two sister languages, Portuguese and Spanish. But when I come to Dante and Petrarca, I must say it seems to me that they closed the cycle of the love sonnets, and that all done after them is either implied or in germ in their work. In fact, Dante's sonnet

> Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare
> La donna mia, quand' ella altrui saluta

stands above all love sonnets as the bourn not to be twice attained, and which recedes with each new generation of poets that passes. I thought I had better remind you of it, hoping it will be a lifelong friend of yours, as it has been of mine.*

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*Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare
La donna mia, quand'ella altrui saluta,
Che ogni lingua divien, tremando, muta,
E gli occhi non ardiscon di guardare.

Ella sen va, sentendosi laudare,
Benignamente d'umiltà vestuta;
E par che sia una cosa venuta
Di cielo in terra a miracol mostrare.

Mostrasi si piacente a chi la mira,
Che dà per gli occhi una dolcezza al core,
Che intender non la può chi non la prova.

E par che della sua labbia si muova
Uno spirito soave e pien d'amore
Che va dicendo all'anima: sospira!

Still it is a splendid crop that of the seeds sown by the Italian love poets of the early Renaissance, and nowhere they produced flowers so much like the primitive ones as in the verses of Camoens. I cannot associate Shakespeare to them, as Shakespeare is a world apart, entirely a new projection on the whole domain of Poetry, but Dante, Petrarca and Camoens come from the same divine pattern; the poetical soul of the first resounded to the end in the second, and their combined spirit passed on to the third and spent itself among men. Camoens as a lyric is the echo of Dante and Petrarca: the echo not of their songs, but of their singing. The three make a chain unique in Poetry. They were detached from the same chorus, which they will have joined again.

Here is one of his sonnets, describing the first impression he had of no longer being free. It was in church, like Petrarca, and on a Holy Friday. I will translate it into English prose. Translations in verse do not associate only two different literatures, as it is inevitable in any translation; they generally associate also two very unequal poets:

"The religious rites were being celebrated in the temple where every being glorified the divine Maker, who on that day had restored his work with his own sacred blood. Love, who watched the occasion, when I felt my will should be safest, stormed my mind and sight with the rarest angelic figure. Believing that the place defended me from his wonted ways, and not knowing that none was too confident to escape him, I let myself be made captive. But today, realizing that he wished me for your slave, I repent of the time I was free."

O culto divinal se celebrava
No templo donde toda creatura
Louva o Feitor divino, que a feitura
Com seu sagrado Sangue restaurava.

Amor alli, que o tempo me aguardava,
Onde a vontade tinha mais segura,
Com uma rara e angelica figura,
A vista da razão me salteava.

Eu, crendo que o lugar me defendia
De seu livre costume, nao sabendo
Que nenhum confiado lhe fugia;

Deixei me captivar; mas hoje vendo,
Senhora, que por vosso me queria,
Do tempo que fui livre me arrependo.

This idea that love conceals itself in the eyes of one who attracts us, to fall by surprise on its prey, comes again and again in different forms:

"The fond and sweet bird is arranging its plumage with its little bill and in the leavy branch it pours forth without restraint its joyful and amorous verses, while the cruel fowler, avoiding in silence and on tiptoe its sight, directs his arrow with a sure eye against its heart giving it on the Stygian lake an eternal nest. In this way my heart, that was moving about in freedom, although long destined to this fate, was wounded where it least expected, as the blind archer waited to take me unaware, concealed in your clear eyes."

Está o lascivo e doce passarinho
Com o biquinho as pennas ordenando;
O verso sem medida, alegre, e brando,
Despedindo no rustico raminho.

O cruel caçador, que do caminho
Se vem callado, e manso desviando,
Com prompta vista a setta endireitando,
Lhe dá no Estygio Lago eterno ninho.

Desta are o coração, que livre andava,
(Posto que já de longe destinado)
Onde menos temia, foi ferido.

Porque o frecheiro cego me esperava
Para que me tomasse descuidado,
Em vossos claros olhos escondido.

This is the usual tone of his sonnets: praises and complaints, caresses and fears:

"Spring is concentrating its colours in your image, on your cheeks, on your lips, it spreads on your brow roses, lilies and carnations. In colouring your features, Nature shows all its art. Hill and valley, river and forest are jealous of such tints. But if you do not allow him who loves you to cull the fruit of those flowers, your eyes will lose all their charm. As it is no use, fair Dame, for Love to sow loves in you, if your condition only produces thorns."

Está-se a Primavera trasladando
Em vossa vista deleitosa e honesta;
Nas bellas faces, e na boca, e testa,
Cecens, rosas e cravos debuxando.

De sorte, vosso gesto matizando,
Natura quanto póde manifesta;
Que o monte, o campo, o rio, e a floresta
Se estão de vós, Senhora, namorando.

Se agora não quereis que quem vos ama
Possa colher o fructo destas flores,
Perderão toda a graça os vossos olhos.

Porque pouco aproveita, linda Dama,
Que semeasse o amor em vós amores,
Se vossa condição produze abrolhos.

—XXVIII.

Compare with this one:

Give back this whiteness to the lily and this crimson colour to the pure roses. Give back to the sun the luminous flames of those eyes that condemn thee to constant robbery. Give back the delightful cadence of this voice to the sweet siren, and this grace to the Graces, who complain of having theirs less serene on thy account. Give back beauty to beautiful Venus, wisdom, genius,

art to Minerva, and purity to chaste Diana. Divest thyself of this greatness, all made of gifts, and thou shalt remain with thyself alone: that is with inhumanity.

Tornai essa brancura á alva assucena,
E essa purpurea côr ás puras rosas:
Tornai ao Sol as chammas luminosas
De essa vista que a roubos vos condena.

Tornai á suavissima sirena
De essa voz as cadencias deleitosas;
Tornai a graça ás Graças, que queixosas
Estão de a ter por vós menos serena.

Tornai á bella Venus a belleza;
A Minerva o saber, o engenho, e a arte;
E a pureza á castissima Diana.

Despojai-vos de toda essa grandeza
De dões; e ficareis em toda parte
Comovosco só, que he só ser inhumana.

—CXX.

He studies the nature of love in his own heart, the maze of its contrasts:

Love is a fire that burns without being seen; a wound that aches, without our minding it; it is a discontented contentment; a pain that makes one rave without feeling the pain. It is to care for nothing but always to care; to live solitary among people; not to feel happy in bliss; to think one wins when one is losing.

It is to remain in prison for pleasure; to serve her who wins her winner; to be loyal to one who kills us. But how can its favour produce so much conformity in human hearts, being love so contrary to itself?

Amor é um fogo que arde sem se ver;
E' ferida que doe, e não se sente;
E' hum contentamento descontente;
E' dor que desatina sem doer.

E' um não querer mais que bem querer,
E' solitario andar por entre a gente;
E' um não contentar-se de contente;
E' cuidar que se ganha em se perder.

E' um estar-se preso por vontade;
E' servir a quem vence o vencedor;
E' um ter com quem nos mata lealdade.

Mas como causar póde o seu favor
Nos mortaes corações conformidade,
Sendo a si tão contrario o mesmo amor?

Here is another that belongs to the metaphysics of love, the essence of Platonism. It is composed on the Petrarchian motif:

L'amante nel amato si trasforme

in the *Triumph of Love.*

"The lover, by virtue of so much thinking of it, transforms himself in the loved thing. I have nothing else to desire, as the desired object is within myself. If my soul is transformed in it, what else could the body obtain? It may rest with itself alone, as the other soul is already tied to it. But this lovely and pure half-Goddess, who, so perfectly as the accident to its subject, conforms herself to my soul, is in my thought as the idea, and the live and pure love of which I am made, as simple matter, seeks its form."

Transforma-se o amador na cousa amada,
Por virtude do muito imaginar:
Não tenho logo mais que desejar,
Pois em mim tenho a parte desejada.

Se nella está minha alma transformada,
Que mais deseja o corpo de alcançar?
Em si sómente pode descansar,
Pois com elle tal alma está liada.

Mas esta linda e pura semidéa,
Que como o accidente em seu sujeito,
Assi com a alma minha se confórma,

Está no pensamento como idéa;
E o vivo e puro amor de que sou feito,
Como a materia simples busca a fórma.

—X.

He looks as a swan who would sing his last song every day:

"The swan, when he feels that his last hour is coming, spreads with a doleful voice a greater harmony along the desert shores. He wishes to enjoy a lengthier day and weeps its early flight. Under the keen grief of departure, he celebrates the sad end of the journey. So, my lady, when I saw the sad end reserved for my devotion, finding myself without a thread of hope, I sang with sweeter accent your disfavors, your false faith and my own love."

O cysne, quando sente ser chegada
A hora que põe termo á sua vida,
Harmonia maior, com voz sentida,
Levanta por a praia inhabitada.

Deseja lograr vida prolongada,
E della está chorando a despedida:
Com grande saudade da partida,
Celebra o triste fim desta jornada.

Assi, Senhora minha, quando eu via
O triste fim que davam meus amores,
Estando posto já no extremo fio;

Com mais suave accento de harmonia
Descantei por os vossos desfavores
La vuestra falsa fé, y el amor mio.

—XLIII.

Here is one that shows well how he imbibes in nature all day long the poetry which he turns into love cadences:

The loveliness of these cool mountains, the shade of the verdant chestnuts, the still flowing of the rivulets, from which all sadness is banished afar; the hoarse sound of the sea, the strange land, the setting of the sun behind the hills, the gathering of the late flocks, the soft war of the clouds in the skies; in fine, all that incomparable Nature offers with such variety, makes me only suffer, if I do not see thee. Without thee all tires and displeases me; without thee I am ever tasting, in the greatest joys, the greatest loneliness.

A formosura desta fresca serra,
E a sombra dos verdes castanheiros;
O manso caminhar destes ribeiros,
Donde toda a tristeza se desterra:

O rouco som do mar, a estranha terra,
O esconder do Sol pelos outeiros,
O recolher dos gados derradeiros,
Das nuvens pelo ar a branda guerra:

Em fim, tudo o que a rara natureza
Com tanta variedade nos offrece,
Me está, se nao te vejo, magoando.

Sem ti tudo me enoja, e me aborrece;
Sem ti perpetuamente estou passando
Nas móres alegrias, mór tristeza.

—CCLXXI.

We come to one of the most beautiful of his sonnets, the one telling of his separation from his beloved one, whether forever or for days, no one knows. It is the Sonnet 24 of his *Rhythmas*. This sonnet is located by Braga on the morning of Camoens's exile from Lisbon, and by Storck on the morning of his departure for India; but are great events really necessary to make two dividing lovers shed streams of tears? Does not the shortest separation often appear tragic enough to them, without any need of exile and persecution? This is a point which lovers can judge better than critics. On

the face of it, it was a separation of which it can be said that all was lost, but love.

"That early morning, so sad, yet so joyful, all full of sorrow and of pity, as long as loving remembrance will exist on earth, I wish it to be forever celebrated. It alone, when coming out fresh and dappled to light the earth, saw the tearing away of two lovers, whose wills shall never be divided. It alone saw running from their eyes threads of tears, which joined into a large stream. It alone heard the doleful words, which could render the fire cold and give rest to the damned souls."

Aquella triste e léda madrugada,
Cheia toda de mágoa e de piedade,
Em quanto houver no mundo saudade,
Quero que seja sempre celebrada.

Ella só, quando amena e marchetada
Sahia, dando á terra claridade,
Vio apartar-se de uma outra vontade,
Que nunca poderá ver-se apartada.

Ella só vio as lagrimas em fio,
Que de uns e de outros olhos derivadas,
Juntando-se, formaram largo rio.

Ella ouvio as palavras magoadas,
Que puderam tornar o fogo frio,
E dar descanso ás almas condemnadas.

Here you see his force, his earnestness, his power of moving the heart, so great that one can hardly realize that so much emotion can hold within so few lines.

Here is another in the same strain, although with a touch of resignation, which, strange to say, comes from the loss of all hope:

"What more can I expect from the World, if having given it so much love, I only got back discontent and disfavor, and finally death, than which nothing could be more cruel. Since life does not satiate me of living, and since I find that a great grief does not

kill, if there is anything that gives a stronger pain, I am ready to try it, as I can endure all. Death to my great grief has insured me against all possible calamities. I have lost her whom fear taught me to lose. In life I received only unlove; in death, the great sorrow that remains to me. It seems that only for this I was born."

Que poderei do Mundo já querer,
Pois no mesmo em que puz tamanho amor,
Não vi senão desgosto e desfavor,
E morte, em fim, que mais não póde ser?

Pois me não farta a vida de viver,
Pois já sei que não mata grande dor,
Se houver cousa que magoa dê maior,
Eu a verei, que tudo posso ver.

A morte, a meu pezar, me assegurou
De quanto mal me vinha: já perdi
O que a perder o medo me ensinou.

Na vida desamor sómente vi;
Na morte a grande dor me ficou.
Parece que para isto só nasci.

I will read a last one, his celebrated sonnet

Alma minha gentil que te partiste,

considered the most beautiful of all. The story, as I said, with the daughter of Dom Antonio de Lima makes Camoens leave Portugal in her lifetime, and write his sonnet on her death years afterwards in India. Braga pretends that he wrote it as late as in 1561. If this sonnet had been written in India on the delayed news of the death of one seen for the last time years before, as Braga believes, the verses would have more the character of a reminiscence than that of burning love, and they would probably contain some mark of the poet's sad wanderings and of the great work he was then absorbed in.

This sonnet has been often translated into English verse. The two first verses are nearly the same as the first in Petrarca's sonnet

Quest'anima gentil che si departe,
Anzi tempo chiamata al altra vita;

but, if the start is the same, the flight is wholly different:

"My own gentle soul, who so early hast departed disconsolate from this life, may you enjoy forever the rest of heaven and I live here on earth with my sorrow. If in the ethereal seat, to which thou didst ascend, memories of this life are allowed, do not forget that ardent love which thou hast seen so pure in my look. And if the grief, that remains with me from the pain without remedy of losing thee, deserves any reward, beseech God, who has shortened thy years, to take me from here to see thee as quickly as from my eyes He took thee."

Alma minha gentil, que te partiste
Tao cedo desta vida descontente,
Repousa lá no Ceo eternamente,
E viva eu cá na terra sempre triste.

Se lá no assento Ethereo, onde subiste,
Memoria desta vida se consente,
Não te esqueças de aquelle amor ardente,
Que já nos olhos meus tão puro viste.

E se vires que póde merecer-te
Alguma cousa a dor, que me ficou
Da mágoa sem remedio de perder-te;

Roga a Deus, que teus annos encurtou,
Que tão cedo de cá me leve a ver-te,
Quão cedo de meus olhos te levou.

The melody of this short poem could not be exceeded in our language: in it the predominant sentiment of the race, the *saudade,* finds its perfect expression.

I should not leave Vassar College without trying to plant here the word *saudade.* In the poems I have read to you I met it many times, but how to translate a sentiment that is not expressed in any other language by a single word? That word of ours we claim to be the most beautiful word of any language; we consider it the gem of human speech. It expresses the sad memories of life, but also its abiding hopes. The tombs bear that inscription, *saudade*; the lovers' message to each other is *saudade; saudade,* the message of the absent to his country and to his friends. *Saudade,* you see, is the ivy of the heart, attached to its ruins and growing in its solitude. To render its meaning, you would have to take four English words: remembrance, love, grief and longing. Without any one of them you could not wholly express the feeling. Still *saudade* is simply a new form, polished by tears, of the word *soledade,* solitude, just as our word *adeus, adieu,* is the survival of the two words, once said as farewell: *A Deus, A Dieu, to God.* "I commend thee to God." Solitude creates loneliness; *saudade* is the feeling of loneliness, after the loss of what kept company to one's heart: either the country, the home, the friends, any whom we love or loved, be that separation a passing one, or be it death. Hence the infinite scale of the word to express all states of mind characterized by the void of the loved thing in one's soul. It is most singular that only one human race has distilled from the word *solitude* its impression over the heart; that only one possesses a word for regret at loss or absence, mingled with the wish to see again, and that only one has that sentiment constantly on its lips. The word *longing* must have been an attempt at a comprehensive word for the same feeling, taken not from the word loneliness, but from

the word *longe,* being apart, *far away,* but it did not obtain the same triumph in English as *saudade* in Portuguese, perhaps because of your race not being a nostalgic one. *Longing,* indeed, is not the popular coin of your language, while *saudade* is the soul, the essence, of Portuguese, and gives to it the perfume of a field of violets. That word is enough by itself to show the solitary nature of the race, its homesickness, its attachments to its early impressions, its innate sadness, the sadness of those who never care for anything future that has no roots in the past.

Of the light, fancy verses of Camoens, the *Letter to a Lady* gives a sufficient idea. It is a pure *badinage,* but it shows how his imagination was as active in the sports of his heart as in its pangs:

"Near the clear source of the Ganges the dwellers live on the perfume of the flowers that grow on the hill. As the senses alone can give food to life, it is no wonder, if those live by smelling, that I live by seeing you.

"There is a tree which gets so sad among the general contentment, that, when it is night, it blossoms and at daylight it loses its leaves. Myself, who feel all the price of looking at you, I get sad at your sight, as I know I do not deserve the glory of being sad.

"A King of great power trained himself with poison, so that he would not suffer, if, as was the custom, it was ever given to him by others. With me, who since a child accustomed my sight to all that is suffering, it happens that pain only hurts me, when absent.

"There is a disease of which one gets cured by a secret of nature on the simple sight of a bird. From the illness which love fosters within me, I would be cured by seeing that Phœnix, were it not for the dropsy that remains of wishing more the more I get.

"Love, in order to keep its power, made a reluctant will enamoured of a statue and then converted the statue into a woman. Whom

could I complain of, or accuse of deceiving me, if I follow and seek an image, which from human is turning herself into marble?

"If any one swears false on the waters of a certain source, he at once gets blind. You, tyrant of my freedom, you order, when I speak the truth, that I see you no more.

"The palm is so hard and so strong that weight does not break it; on the contrary, in its conceit, it rises still more when bended. The harm you do me does not bend only my constancy, it bends also my desire; yet, at once, I love you still more.

"If any one puts out the eyes of the swallow, the mother immediately goes for an herb that makes others grow. I have my eyes fixed on yours, which are stars: those of the understanding got blind, but came those of reason, so that I could enjoy my torment.

"While sailing towards the East we discovered a river and wondered that the wood that fell in it was changed into stone. Yet, it is greater wonder that a heart be converted into diamond in a flow of tears.

"A dumb fish can impress on the line and on the rod such a deadly shock that the arm of the angler will be paralized. If my eyes begin to drink of this rapturous poison they will not be able to move at anything else that appears.

"How many contradictions love causes to double our torments! The same lovely sight, that makes me content, condemns me to sadness, as the flame, that goes out with the wind, with the same wind is kindled again."

Like the Italian poets, Camoens wrote also *Canções, Canzones.* In these he was not limited to a small number of verses, and could let free his inspiration. They are long talks with himself about his loves, his hopes, and his desires, and nowhere the thrilling and melodious kind of soul he possessed appears in such a light:

One of the most beautiful is the Canção X, written in the East, on the Arabian coast. I will read it in

part. Braga calls it "the deepest expression of human grief." I would not say that, after the *Psalms* and the *Book of Job*, and the *Divine Comedy*; I do not compare love sufferings with the real tragedies of the soul; but I agree that the kind of grief there is in disappointed love was never expressed in a more harmonious and touching strain.

"Here I had no place where to lie, not a single hope on which a moment to rest my head; all was for me pain, cause for suffering, yet not for dying, as I had to undergo my whole fate, never once appeased. These furious seas, I tame them with my sighs. These winds, they seem to refrain, importuned by my voice. Only the severe Heaven, and the stars, and the ever cruel fate find pleasure in my eternal suffering, and in showing themselves indignant against a piece of clay, a vile worm of the earth.

If after so many labours I got at least to know for certain that some hour I was remembered by the clear eyes which I once saw; if this sad voice, breaking the distance could touch the angelic ears of the one on whose sight I once lived, and if she turned a little on herself, revolving in her anxious mind the times gone by of my sweet faults, of the dear pains and wraths, suffered and sought for her, and were she, however late, to become compassionate and to weigh in her heart my woe, and within herself to think she had been cruel to me. . . . If I knew only that, it would be rest for the life remaining to me and how would I caress my suffering! . . . Ah! Senhora! Senhora!"

"How rich you are, that here, so far away, you feed me with joy only by such a sweet fiction! As soon as the thought portrays you, all pain and all grief disappears. With your remembrance only I feel safe and strong against death's fiercest countenance and at once hopes flock to me, thanks to which the brow, rendered more serene, converts the hardest torments into gentle and suave longings.

Here I remain with my memories inquiring about you, from the amorous winds that blow from the parts where you dwell; asking the birds, which there take their flight, if they saw you, what were you doing and talking, where, how, with whom, what day and what hour. And the tired life recovers new spirits, with which to win fortune and toil, only to return to see you, to serve and to love you

again. But the ardent desire, that never suffered delay, rashly reopens the wounds of my suffering.

And thus I live. . . .If any one asked thee, my Canzone, why I do not die, answer that because death is my life."

Now we come to the eleventh Canção, certainly his highest title as a love poet. You will first take into account the great difference between a Portuguese poem and an English translation, and this one by a foreigner, who learned your language at random, and then judge by yourselves if it deserves or not the praise bestowed upon it by his admirers. Dr. Wilhelm Storck, his German coryphoeus, calls this Canzone "the queen of all Canzones of all poets preceding or following Camoens or his contemporaries." Richard Burton, his English coryphoeus, agrees with the Morgado de Matteus, one of the Portuguese worshippers of Camoens, in ranking the Canção

Vinde cá, meu tão certo Secretario,

with two others of his, higher than the finest Canzones of Petrarca. I do not like ranking masterpieces. All classification of them is only a personal caprice of the critic. To be able to weigh comparatively the inspiration of the most beautiful Canzones of Petrarca and Camoens would require a poet superior to either, possessing not only the gifts of both, but the spirit of their two Ages and languages. A critic may be a very unassuming person, but his profession, more than that of the judge, as he makes his own law, is by itself an assumption of superiority. Willing and reasoned admiration is never such a perfect tribute as the unconscious one, that which does not know where it begins and where it ends. I am content to say that the

eleventh Canção seems to me as beautiful a strain of harmony as ever fell from a human instrument; that no love tears glisten purer in Poetry than the ones trembling forever in those verses.

"Come here, faithful Secretary of the complaints I am always making, paper, on which I unload my heart. Let us tell the unreasons which the inexorable fate, deaf to tears and prayers, deals me since I live. Let us throw a few drops of water on so much fire and kindle with our outcries a torture new to all memories. Let us tell such wrong to God, to the world, to men, and, in fine, to the winds, to which so many times I have confided it in vain, as I am telling it now. But as I was born for endless errors, I do not doubt that this will be one more of them. And since I am so far from finding my right way, I should not be accused for erring also in this. At least I have this one refuge for speaking and for erring, without offense, freely. How sad he who is content with so little.

"I have long desisted from seeking cure in complaining; but who suffers is forced to cry out, if the pain is excessive; I will shout, though the voice is weak and small to relieve me, and that not even with shouting the grief will abate. Who will grant me at least to pour tears and infinite sighs, equal to the sorrow that dwells within me? But who could ever measure grief by tears or cries? Still I will tell thee that which wrath, pain and their recollection teach me. . . . As no other pain is by itself harder or stronger. Come you, who are in despair and listen to me, and let fly away those who live on hope, or those who imagine themselves in it, because love and fortune combine to leave them power to ascertain the true measure of the woes that may befall them.

"When I came fresh to light from the maternal tomb, unhappy stars at once put me in bondage, barring from me my true will; I knew a thousand times in happiness the better and followed constrained the worse. To give me ever torments conforming with my years, they ordered that, when still an infant, I gently opened my eyes, a blind boy would wound me. The tears of childhood came already mingled with enamoured longings; my cries in the cradle sounded to me like sighs. Destiny and age were in accord, and when they rocked me with sad love songs, my nature at once was lulled into sleep, so much akin was it to sadness.

"My nurse was some weird creature as destiny did not wish that a woman had such name for me, nor was any who could. Thus

was I suckled; I drank from a child the amorous poison that I would drink in full age, so that it would not kill me by my being accustomed to it. Then I saw the image and the likeness of that feral human creature so beautiful, who reared me at the breasts of Hope, and of whom I afterwards saw the original, which makes of my great errors a proud and sovereign sin. It seems it had the human form, but it scintillated divine spirits. It had a demeanour and a presence that all evil felt vain glory at its sight; its shade and light excelled the power of Nature.

"What a kind so new of torment had love, that was not only tried on me, but wholly executed! Implacable harshness had ashamed and shaken from its purpose the fervent wish, that gives strength to thought. Here were phantastic shades, brought from some daring hopes; with them the true blisses were also painted and feigned, but the pain of the contempt which I received, putting every fancy in confusion, disconcerted its ingenious dreams. My occupation was to guess and to hold as truth what was guess, and then to unsay myself in shame; in fine to lend a contrary sense to what I saw, to find reasons for everything,—while the unreasons were much more evident.

"I do not know if she knew that she was stealing my own vitals with her rays and that they fled to her subtly through my eyes. Little by little, invincibly, they went from me, just as the ardent sun draws the subtle humours from the veil of the skies. In fine the pure and transparent mien, compared to which this name of "beautiful" remains without value, the sweet and compassionate moving of the eyes, which held the souls in suspense, were the magic herbs which Heaven made me drink and which for long years have transformed me into another being, and I was so pleased with seeing myself so changed, that I deceived my pains with my dreams, and before my eyes I held a veil to hide from myself the growing harm that was increasing within me, like one who was brought up with caresses from him for whom he had grown.

"Who could paint the absent life, my discontent at all I saw; my feeling always away from wherever I was; my speaking without knowing what my words meant; my going without seeing through where, and my sighing without knowing I was sighing, when that state most tormented me, and I felt the pain that came to the world from the waters of Tartarus, more severe than all others and which used to convert soft grief into fiercest rage? Then mad with pain, and not wishing to cease to love, I turned in another direction for vengeance the wish deprived of hope, and which hardly could be changed. Then the sweet remembrance of the

past, a torment soft, pure, and doleful, came to convert those furies into tears of love.

"What excuses did I not seek with myself alone when fond love did not suffer me to find fault in the loved thing, and how dearly loved! Such were the remedies imagined by fear of torment, which taught my life to maintain itself through snares. In this I passed a part of it, and in that part, if I ever had one joy, short, imperfect, timid and wrong, it was only the seed of a protracted and bitterest torture. This continuous course of sadness, those steps vainly scattered, went on extinguishing the ardent taste of those enamoured thoughts which I had fixed so earnestly in my soul and with which I had fed my tender nature. The latter through the long habit of adversity, to which no human strength can resist, ended by turning to the taste of feeling sad.

"Thus I went changing my life into another, not I, my own adverse fate, and even so I would not have changed that life for any other. It made me leave the loved paternal nest and cross the long sea, which so many times threatened my life. Now experiencing the rare fury of Mars, who wished me at once to touch in my own eyes his bitter fruit, and in this escutcheon of mine you will see the picture of the terrible fire. Now a pilgrim, wandering among the different Nations, apart in languages, costumes and qualities, only to follow thee Fortune, that consumest life's ages, carrying before each of them a hope brilliant as a diamond, but which when it falls from thy hand one recognizes to be only useless glass.

"Human pity failed me; I saw the friendly people hostile at my first danger and in the second no land could I find where I could set my foot; even air to breathe was denied me; I had not for me either time or the world. What an arduous and deep mystery is this! To be born to live and yet to be refused all that the world has to give for life. And not to find a way of losing it, it being lost so many times already! In fine there was no transe of fortune, nor peril, nor doubtful cases, (injustices from those whom the confused law, the ancient abuse of the world, renders powerful over other men), that I did not bear, attached to the faithful column of my suffering, which the importuning persecution of ill broke a thousand times to pieces by the strength of its arms.

"I do not recall such suffering, as one who after a raging storm tells of its wrecks inside a quiet port, as even now wavering fortune compels me to undergo so many miseries that I fear to take a single step more. Already I do not recoil before any coming evil, nor do I pretend to any good which may be failing me, as I find human cunning of no avail against fate. I am pending from a sov-

ereign force, from Divine Providence. What I see and dream, sometimes. I take it as a comfort for so many wrongs. But when human frailty throws its eyes on current fortune and only obtains a memory of past years, what waters I then drink and what bread I eat, are sad tears, which I never can control except by building in the imagination phantastic pictures of joy.

"If it were possible for time to turn backwards, as memory does, over the traces of the first age and, webbing again the old story of my sweet errors, it carried me amidst the flowers of the youth, which I once saw, and, then the remembrance of the loved past becoming greater content for me, if I enjoyed again the suave and pleasant talk where stood one and other keys of my present thought, the fields, the walks, the signals, the sight, the snow, the rose, the beauty, the grace, the sweetness, the courtesy, the simple friendship that deviates away all earthly and impure intention, and the one like which I never saw any other! Alas, vain memories! Whereto do you take my frail heart, as I cannot yet well tame this useless desire of yours!

"No more, Canção, no more, as I would speak like this for a thousand years without feeling it, and if by chance they accuse thee of being long and heavy, answer that the water of the sea cannot hold in such a narrow vase. Nor do I sing those delicate points for love of praise; I tell pure truths really lived by me. Would God they were dreams!"

I think I have read tonight enough of Camoens to give you the idea that he really deserves to be counted among the greatest lyric poets. I believe the gems of his poetry placed before you will last as long as the other literary heirlooms of mankind. Modern reading is so indiscriminate that the popularity of an author is no test of his intrinsic value. One had better not touch Homer, or Dante, or Camoens, if one has contracted the habit of reading to kill time. To enjoy their company we need the contrary habit of reading to treasure up our passing hours in undying recollections. To read the great authors of the past is a duty for all who are real particles of the human intelligence. If one lets his taste for the writings of the day absorb him, he overlooks that sacred duty of watching over the pre-

cious deposits of the human mind, of keeping fresh and retentive the memory of our race, of increasing its touch with the past the more it drifts away from us. A humanity, wholly interested in the present, losing gradually its memory, unable to enjoy what should be its greatest pleasure: that of living anew by recollection in its ages of art and poetry and legend, would be a sad sight, however great the material development around it. Any shrinking of human imagination would be fatal to mind and heart, however great might be the increase of discovery. I do not think any such caution from a stranger is needed at your hearth, no more than one from a barbarian on the keeping of the palladium would be needed at the house of the Roman Vestals. I simply explain my coming here to speak of Camoens and not of the passing literature of the day.

I thought his name deserved to awake the echoes of this Institution, which stands so far ahead of our times, if the whole of mankind is considered. Immigration was the greatest human fact of the nineteenth century, and the social progress of woman will be the greatest human fact of the twentieth. Both are as yet principally American facts. As to the first, the Lusiads can be called the Poem of Immigration. As to the second, there is nothing expressed in it about the idea that inspired the creation of Vassar College; but if the means are left in the shade, the end is in full light in the poem, and woman, as Camoens has drawn her, is the noblest type that could be carved by centuries of the highest education. To speak and to act like his Venus, his Queen Maria; to die like his Ignez de Castro, or his Dona Leonor de Sá, supposes and requires the crystallisation of the soul as a divine mirror, which certainly would be the goal of education, if all

education had not of necessity to be content with a limit, in order to give a higher average.

Were love to be banished from life, from literature and from art, the Lusiads, like the Iliad, and the Odyssey, and the Bible, would cease to count for mankind; but however supremely love might be purified by Religion and moral dignity, the Lusiads would keep intact its heat and its light. You will find in its poetry the soul of the Renaissance purified by the breath of Chivalry. It is the poem of heroism as well as that of love; the poem of Neptune as the poem of Venus; that is, it represents the combined power of the two poles of mankind: the masculine and the feminine.

In one single respect familiarity with the Lusiads might be of some danger for women: it might make them too conscious of their power. Already in the relations of Venus with Jupiter at the beginning the force of the womanly appeal shows itself irresistible. Throughout the poem beauty and gentleness operate miracles, which, although disguised under mythological garb, are really symbolic of the power of woman. But I think you are taught here not to abuse that power.

Future alumnae of Vassar, I am glad to bring to you the greetings of your fellow students of Brazil. Our country has a title to your sympathy: she has paid the highest posible compliment to woman by rejecting, when a Monarchy, the Salic Law, and alone, of the American nations, she was ruled over by a woman. Among the daughters of our Continent none, except your Mrs. Beecher Stowe, could claim precedence in History before the Brazilian Princess, who attached her name to our two great Acts for the Emancipation of the Slaves. We are proud of the magnifi-

cent part of the earth God gave to [redacted]d of many of our national features, but by far [redacted]atest pride is the Brazilian woman, and our hope [redacted] that higher education will enlarge her mind without touching at her heart. We can well have that assurance, as this is the greatest experience of Vassar College.

I feel most grateful to President Taylor for the great opportunity he gave me of speaking to you of Camoens. If I were to make a votive tablet for Matthew Vassar in Camonian style I would only have to alter two words of the stanza of the LUSIADS in honor of the poet-king Dom Diniz, the founder of Coimbra University:

"It was he who first caused the high craft of Minerva to be practised *by woman* and who made the Muses desert the Helicon to tread the rich verdure of *the Hudson.* All that could be expected from Athens is given here by proud Apollo; here he distributes the wreaths of baccharis and evergreen laurel twined with gold."

—III, 97.

Fez primeiro *em Coimbra* exercitar-se
O valeroso officio de Minerva;
E de Helicona as Musas fez passar-se
A pizar *do Mondego* a fertil herva.
Quanto pode d' Athenas desejar-se,
Tudo o soberbo Apollo aqui reserva:
Aqui as capellas dá tecidas de ouro,
Do baccharó, e do sempre verde louro.

III, 97.

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